

LARRY THE O

One of the tools in Studio One's kit is the Audioloop file format, and its variant, the Musicloop format. PreSonus introduced the Audioloop format with the release of Studio One 2, raising the question of whether the world really needed more loop file formats. Well, it's not quite drowning in them: REX2, Apple Loops, WAV and Acidised WAV are really the only formats in wide use. So it would seem there is room, if there was something worthwhile a new format could offer.

So What's New?

The Audioloop and Musicloop formats offer several intriguing features. Like REX files, Audioloop files contain tempo-tagged, sliced audio, but Audioloop audio does not have to be sliced, so the loop can follow tempo changes with or without time-stretching. Interestingly, the Audioloop and Musicloop formats are built on parts of the ZIP file specification, so Audioloops and Musicloops are valid ZIP files.

The Musicloop file format is an Audioloop file with a few extras added. Musicloop files also store performance (MIDI) data, the virtual instrument preset used, and any effects presets used on the instrument channels. All this is in addition to an audio file.

If we take a closer look, some of the interesting possibilities become clearer. For a start, the audio is in an uncompressed format (WAV or FLAC). It is clear enough what is in this file with an Audioloop, but what kind of audio is stored with a Musicloop? It's a bounce of the instrument track to an audio file through any and all effects on the instrument channels. Dragging a Musicloop out of

Picture 1: Dropping a Musicloop file from the Browser into a Song. Most of the time, a Musicloop will be dragged in to create an Instrument track playing the instrument and performance data in the Musicloop file. Dropping it on an existing audio track, as shown here, results in the audio file contained in the Musicloop file being used instead of the performance data.

Go Loopy

Explore and learn to use Studio One 2's Audioloop and Musicloop formats.

the Browser creates an instrument track (unless you drag it to an existing track), puts the MIDI/performance data on it, instantiates the instrument, loads the preset, instantiates the instrument channel's effects, and loads their presets, all from a single drag-and-drop.

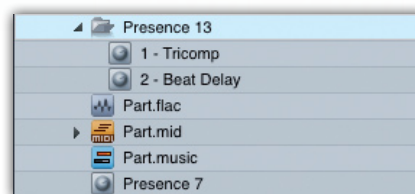
In picture 1, a Musicloop file is being dropped onto an existing audio track, instead of an instrument track. In this case, the audio file contained in the Musicloop file is used on the track, but it could be transformed into an instrument part because the Musicloop contains both instrument and performance data.

The performance data is stored as a Standard MIDI File (SMF), and also as a '.music' file, which is a PreSonus proprietary performance data format with much higher resolution than MIDI. The instrument and effects presets are stored in their native formats, and this is where things start getting interesting.

Musicloops

There are three versions of Studio One: Artist, Producer, and Professional. All of them come bundled with content, including Audioloops and Musicloops. Click the Sounds tab at the bottom of the Browser, then open the Studio One Musicloops folder and the Drums subfolder. You'll see files with .musicloop extensions, but to see what's inside them, right-click (Ctrl-click on Mac) on one of the Musicloop files and choose 'Show Package Contents' from the contextual menu that drops down.

A disclosure triangle should have appeared next to the file (and will remain there from this point on), and clicking that drops down all of those wonderful components I was talking about: an audio file, an SMF (with .mid extension),

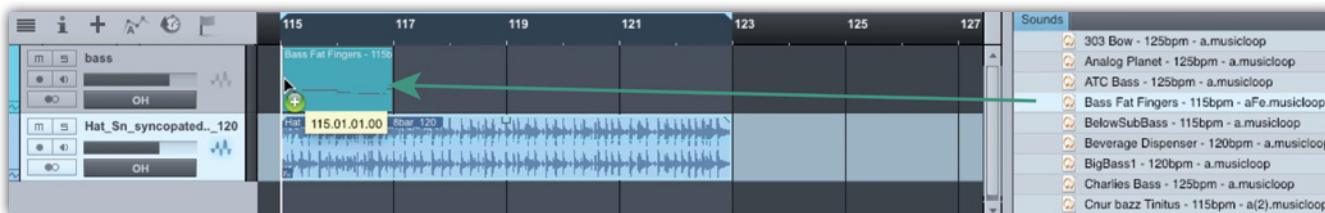


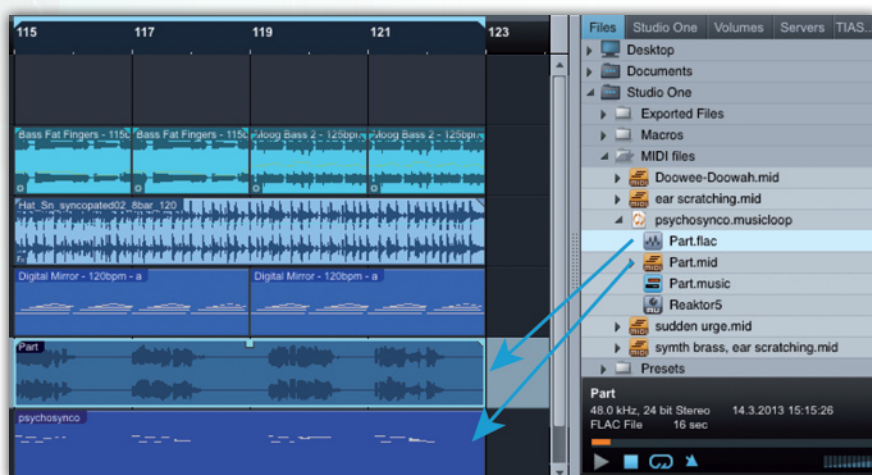
Picture 2: Choosing the Show Package Contents command from the Musicloop contextual menu makes the components of the Musicloop file available individually.

the PreSonus .music file of the same performance data, and an instrument preset. It looks as though you could drag any one of those components out of the Browser and into a track as easily as dragging the whole Musicloop file, and, of course, that is exactly the case, so the audio and MIDI loops contained in the file can be used separately from each other.

For instance, in picture 3, I have dragged the audio file in as the basic loop. The MIDI file has been dragged in separately to create an instrument track with the loop, which doubles the original loop with a different instrument than what is stored in the Musicloop. Note that the track is named 'Part' because that is the name of the component. Changing the name to a more informative one is suggested.

If I double-click on the .musicloop file in the Browser, the Preview Player plays the audio file stored in the loop file, which is, of course, the original version. (Double-clicking the FLAC or WAV file in the loop file will play the same thing.) But maybe I want to hear that same loop on another synth. All I do is make sure that synth is in the Song and that the instrument track playing it is selected. Then I double-click the .mid file and the loop plays on the selected track. With looped playback in the Preview Player, I can click on various instrument tracks running





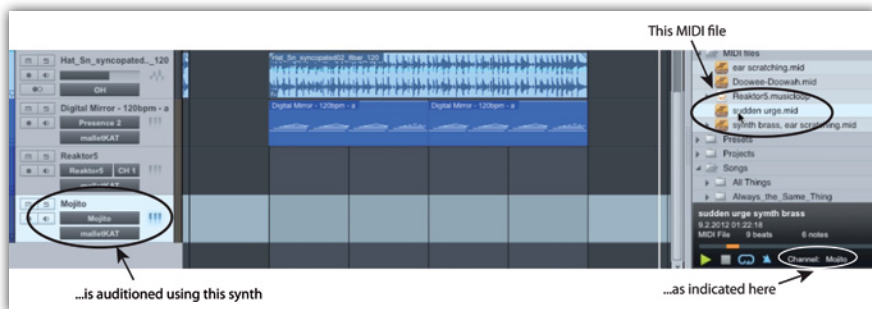
different instruments to quickly audition the same loop on each of them. You can do the same thing with .music files. I like this a lot; anything that lets me try ideas very fast enhances my music making.

Audioloops

Now let's look at an Audioloop file. Studio One Artist does not include any Audioloop files, but Producer and Professional do. If you have Artist, never fear; it's not hard to make your own Audioloop files, as we will discover shortly. Open the Electronic Audioloops collection in the Sounds tab of the Browser, and then open Drum & Bass Jungle/Drum & Bass Pack 150bpm. All of the Audioloops have disclosure triangles, and clicking them reveals the individual slices in the file. As is the case with Musicloop files, double-clicking on the main file plays the entire audio file, but double-clicking on an individual slice plays only that slice. You can also — again, like Musicloop files — drag any individual slice out of the Browser to use on its own.

Roll Your Own

Musicloop files are created in Studio One from instrument parts. Here's how:



Picture 4: A .mid or .music file can be auditioned by any instrument in the Song, simply by selecting the track for that instrument before clicking the Play button in the Preview Player. You can change presets on the instrument or select a different instrument track while the Preview Player is playing, to try different sounds and sources.

Picture 3: Components of a Musicloop can be used individually. Here, the .mid file has been used to double the loop with a different sound played by another instrument.

- If your loop encompasses multiple parts on a track, select them all and press the G key to merge them into a single part.
- Make sure the settings for the instrument sound and any effects you have on the channel in the mixer are all saved as presets, so they can be stored in the Musicloop file. This is an important step.
- Once the loop is in a single part and presets have been saved, simply drag the part to the Sounds or Files tabs of the Browser.

That's it! You'll see your shiny new Musicloop file wherever you dropped it, and you can look inside it to see its components. The intermediate step to a Musicloop is an instrument part, and the intermediate step to an Audioloop is an audio part.

If your loop encompasses multiple audio events on a track, you'll need to select them all and choose the Audio/Merge to Audio Part command to merge them into an audio part. What used

to be individual Events are now slices in the audio part. Audioloops do not store presets, but, hey, it's always a good idea to store presets anyway, so you might as well.

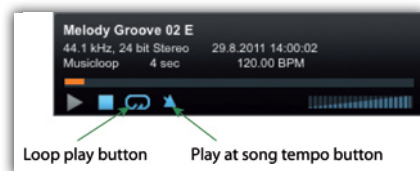
Drag the audio part to the Sounds or Files tab of the Browser and — voila! — you have a new Audioloop file. (Drag that audio part to the Mac Finder or Windows Explorer instead and you get a REX2 file.)

Easy Audition

You will probably want to check your loop as you build it. Trying different sounds with a loop was discussed earlier, but Studio One has a great shortcut for auditioning audio loops, which is simply to Shift-click on the Event you are about to make into an Audioloop or Musicloop and hold down the mouse button. The Event will now loop play until you release the mouse button. Very nice!

You can also audition loops in the Browser in time with the Song, like this:

- Be sure the Play At Song Tempo button in the Preview Player (see picture 5) is engaged (it will be coloured blue). You will usually also want the Loop Play button to its left engaged. Now, when you audition in the Browser while a Song is playing, the loop being auditioned plays at the Song's tempo, as long as the loop file contains a tempo value (which it certainly should).



Picture 5: The Preview Player makes it really easy to audition loops.

- Select the loop you want to audition.
- Start the Song playing.
- While the tempo will be right, the trick is getting the loop to start playing at the right time. Click the Play button in the Browser's Preview Player at the correct moment in the Song.

Endless Possibilities

PreSonus's new Audioloop and, especially, Musicloop file formats have some powerful capabilities. The fact that the Musicloop file carries an audio file as well as all the data needed to recreate the original loop opens up many possibilities, and the drag-and-drop simplicity of making and using these files encourages you to explore those possibilities. **///**

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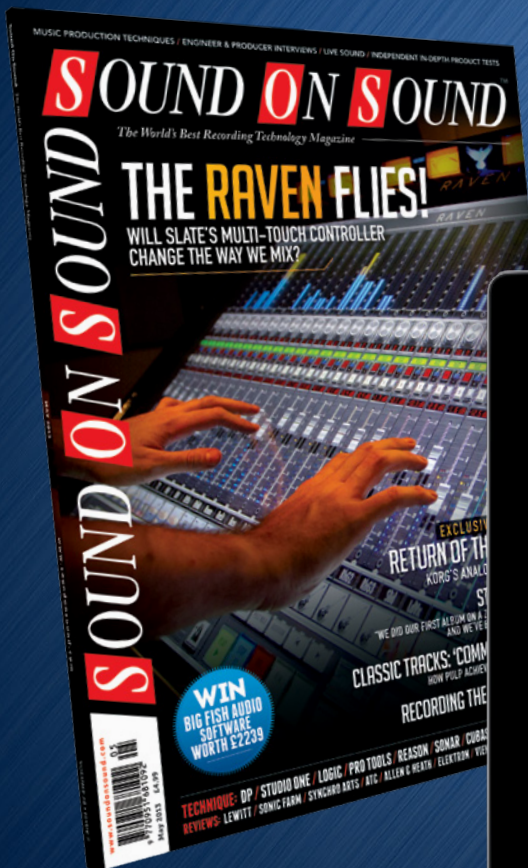


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